Making levy on Rice Optional

5878. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Government have recently suggested to the State Governments to make levy on rice optional for traders and millers; and

(b) if so, what has been the response from the State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) The State Governments of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh were requested in March 1995 to make levy on rice optional for the rice millers/ traders for the rest of the current Kharif Season, if the State Governments so desire. So far none of these State Governments have taken a decision on the subject.

Wrong figures of sugar production leading to import of sugar

5879. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether the import of sugar is done on the basis of sugar production figures given by his Ministry;

(b) whether the Ministry of Food has given wrong figures of sugar production resulting in heavy import of sugar;

(c) if so, who is responsible for such acts; and

(d) the further action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) The import of sugar is done taking into account the carryover stocks at the beginning of the season, estimated production, requirement of sugar for domestic consumption, etc. The estimates of sugar production are formulated on season to season basis keeping in view the inputs received from sugar factories, estimates given by the apex bodies of the Sugar Industry, estimates provided by the State Governments, estimated area and sugar cane production formulated by the Ministry of Agriculture, etc. Further for the sugar season 1994-95 (October to September) an Inter-Ministerial Group consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Food was constituted to make an estimate of sugar production for the current season.

Further, the Ministry of Food has taken up with specialised agencies to develop an appropriate & reliable scientific forecasting model for both the production & demand of sugar.

The sugar production during 1993-94 season declined to 98.12 lakh tonnes from the level of 134.11 lakh tonnes during 1991-92 season and 106.09 lakh tonnes during 1992-93 season. The decline in production during 1993-94 season was due to fall in cane/sugar production in the major sugar producing state of Maharashtra and higher diversion of cane to gur and khandsari sectors.

Non procurement of Rabi crops by Government Agencies in Punjab due to lack of storage

5880. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the purchase of Rabi Crops in Punjab by Government agencies has not yet taken off mainly for the want of storage facilities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Against the market arrival of 49.88 lakh tonnes of wheat in Punjab, 49.52 lakh tonnes of wheat has been procured upto 10.5.1995 in the current Rabi Marketing

Season 1995-96 as compared to 55.71 lakh tonnes procured against the arrival of 56.55 lakh tonnes of wheat during the corresponding period last year.

Gian Prakash Committee Report

5881. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to refer to the answer given to Starred Question No. 281 in the Rajya Sabha on the 24th April, 1995 and also to the Supplementaries asked on Starred Question Nos. 85 and 97 in the House on the 20th March, 1995 and state:

(a) whether the question of mala fide on the part of any one was referred to and examined by the Gian Prakash Committee;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and if not, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report published in "The Times of India" of the 19th December, 1994 under the heading, "Corruption angel not probed: Gian";

(d) if so, what are the facts in this regard; and

(e) under what circumstances Government have come to the conclusion that the Gain Prakash Committee Report does not mention any matter that would create suspicion of mala fide on the part of any one and what are the detials in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) A preliminary Administrative enquiry to ascertain and report facts and dix prima facie responsibility for lapsses, if any, in dealing with the situation arising out of shortage in availability of sugar was ordered in July, 1994.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) As indicated above, Shri Gain Prakash has conducted a preliminary administrative enquiry and not a public enquiry under the Commission of Enquiries Act. It was not his brief to look into allegations of corruption nor was he an investigating agency to investigate into such charges.

(e) The Government has come to this conclusion after a perusal of the Gain Prakash Committee's Report, a copy of which has already been placed in the Parliament Library.

Committee to examine administrative remedial measures of Gain Prakash Committee Report

5882. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 97 given in the Rajya Sabha on 20th March, 1995 and state:

(a) when the Committee of Secretaries under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary was set up to examine the administrative premedial measures recommended by Shri Gain Prakash Committee and on which date it submitted its report;

(b) what are the details of the recommendations made by Shri Gain Prakash Committee which were examined by this Committee;

(c) what are the details of the recommendations made by the Committee; and

(d) what action Government have taken on each of its recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) A copy of the Gain Prakash Committee's Report has been placed in the Parliament Library. The Report makes certain recommendations in dealing with future situations of sugar shortage. These include the need to evolve an integrated policy on all sweeteners, creation of a buffer stock, use of scientific forecasting and estimation methods, improvements in administrative arrangements for monitoring and dealing with sugar shortages and its implementation, keeping sugar under OGL with no duty, etc.